

# Beethoven's Musical Influence on the Solo Piano Music of Juri Seo

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### *Introduction*

When it comes to contemporary music, it is new, creative, and innovative, but simultaneously seems to be unfamiliar due to a lack of accessibility. Many contemporary musical works are still not considered the standard repertoires that are commonly performed at performance venues. For example, John Cage's (1912-1992) "Sonata and Interludes" (1946-48) for prepared piano uses screws, bolts, rubber, plastic, nuts, and erasers on piano strings, while Henry Cowell's (1898-1965) *The Banshee* (1925) asks the pianist to reach inside the piano and sweep the strings. Modern works such as these, in addition to Milton Babbitt's (1916-2011) "Reflections" (1974) for piano and synthesized tape, all create unique sounds and experiences, but the works are unfortunately not often performed. Although these composers' compositions did not become popular to perform, they sought a goal of expanding musical boundaries by experimenting with new compositional techniques. While pressing forward with experimentation, they also looked back on the past for inspiration. The American composer George Rochberg (1918-2005) quoted Johann Sebastian Bach's (1685-1750) *Partita* in E Minor, BWV 830 (published in 1731) in *Nach Bach*, Fantasy for Harpsichord or Piano (1966), and referenced different styles of music such as toccata, ragtime, blues, fanfare and march in "Carnival music" (1971).<sup>1</sup> Missy Mazzoli (b. 1980) quoted the fragments of Franz Schubert's (1797-1828) Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959 (1828) in her piece "Isabelle Eberhardt Dreams of

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<sup>1</sup> Yu-Ching Chin, "A Recording and Performer's Analysis of Partita-Variations for Piano Solo by George Rochberg" (DMA diss., Ball State University, 2012), 22-28.

Pianos” for piano and electronics (2007).<sup>2</sup> Another woman composer Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964) completed six piano etudes (1996-2005). Each etude is a homage to six composers, Luciano Berio (1925-2003), Béla Bartók (1881-1945), Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), Pierre Boulez (1925-2016), Morton Feldman (1926-1987), and David Rakowski (b. 1958), and she referenced each composers’ style in each etude.

These works exhibit two compositional methods, quotations that use an exact copy of original works and reference that borrows ideas, materials, and styles from original works and modifies them. The two methods are not limited to contemporary composers, but have always been found in their predecessors’ music. Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) wrote Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24 (1861) based on a theme from Harpsichord Suite No. 1 in B-flat Major, HWV 434 (published in 1733) by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759), and Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) quoted Prelude Op. 28, No. 20 in C Minor by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) in Variation on a Theme of Chopin, Op. 22 (1902-03) as a theme. Claude Debussy (1862-1918) borrowed the famous Tristan chord from Richard Wagner’s (1813-1883) Opera *Tristan und Isolde* (1859) and used it as a gesture of humor in the sixth piece “Golliwogg’s Cakewalk” of *Children’s Corner*, L. 113 (1906-08).<sup>3</sup> Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was inspired by Niccolò Paganini’s (1782-1840) virtuosity, and composed a set of six etudes with a style of Paganini: *The Grandes études de Paganini*, S. 141 (1831, revised in 1851). Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) admired Chopin and his influence is revealed in the music of Scriabin’s early

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<sup>2</sup> “List of Works: Solo,” Missy Mazzoli, accessed August 2, 2020, <http://www.missymazzoli.com/solo>.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Frederick Jensen, *Debussy, The Master Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 215-217.

period, such as 24 Preludes, Op. 11 (1888-96).<sup>4</sup> Regardless of generations, composers have had an enormous impact on each other.

If most experts could choose the most innovative and influential musician in the history of western classical music, many would likely decide upon Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). Although Beethoven is primarily known as a Classical composer, many experts also consider him to be a pioneer of Romanticism in music. Beethoven is considered the first composer who combined choral music with the symphonic musical form in his Symphony No. 9 in D Minor, Op. 125 (1822-24). His nine symphonies influenced the following generations of composers, such as Anton Bruckner, Schubert, Antonin Dvorak, and Ralph Vaughan Williams, to write the same number of symphonies. Beethoven widened the formal structure of instrumental music in many ways. He introduced an ambiguity of key relationships in works such as the first movement of Piano Sonata Op. 53 in C Major (1804), while also expanding coda sections, like the fourth movement of Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67 (1804-08). Another innovation of his was the replacement of a scherzo in place of a Minuet in the third movement, such as his Piano Sonata Op. 2-2 in A Major (1795), and the Symphony No. 3 “Eroica” in E-flat Major, Op. 55 (1802-04). Beethoven’s innovations, consequently, provided a forum for various experiments to later composers.

One of the most significant ideas developed by Beethoven is the concept of a motivic development—a motif, which is a short musical idea, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, or any combination of these three, which can change through many compositional techniques, such as

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<sup>4</sup> Seong-Ae Lim, “The Influence of Chopin in Piano Music on The Twenty-Four Preludes for Piano, Opus 11 of Alexander Scriabin” (DMA diss., The Ohio State University, 2002), 14-18.

sequence, inversion, retrograde, or canon, throughout music.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Beethoven did not invent the motivic development, but his “fate” motif, the ominous four-notes creating “the sound of fate knocking at the door,” of Symphony No. 5 is a groundbreaking display of the effect of motivic development, using a short and simple, but impressive and unforgettable motif (Example 1).<sup>6</sup>

The image displays a page of a musical score for the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, marked "Allegro con brio." The score is in 4/4 time and C minor. It features staves for Flauti, Oboi, Clarinetti in B, Fagotti, Corni in Es, Trombe in C, Timpani in C.G., Violino I, Violino II, Viola, Violoncello, and Basso. The "fate" motif, a four-note sequence (G4, A4, B4, C5), is highlighted with a red box in the Clarinet in B and Violino I parts. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *p*, and a first ending bracket labeled "1".

Example 1. Beethoven's “fate” motif in the first movement of Symphony, No. 5.

<sup>5</sup> William Drabkin, “Motif,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed August 4, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Betsy Schwarm, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, “Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 67,” accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Symphony-No-5-in-C-Minor-Op-67>.

Many composers in later generations use Beethoven’s “fate” motif in their music. The American composer Charles Ives (1874-1954) borrowed the “fate” motif in his Piano Sonata No. 2 “Concord, Mass., 1840-60” (1915).<sup>7</sup> The Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (1876-1946) quoted the “fate” motif in his ballet *El sombrero de tres picos* (The Three-Cornered Hat) that was written in 1916-17.<sup>8</sup> In 1900, Rachmaninoff composed his song Op. 21, No. 1 “Fate” with the imitative “fate” motif (Example 2).<sup>9</sup>

Слова А. Апухтина.  
Words by A. Apukhtin.  
English Version by Rosa Newmarch.

С. РАХМАНИНОВЪ, Соч. 21 № 1.  
S. Rachmaninoff, Op. 21 N<sup>o</sup> 1.

*Allegro moderato. (♩=108.)*

Canto.

Piano.

Съ сво-ей по-ход-но-ю клю-кой, Съ сво-и-ми мрач-ны-ми о-ча-ми Судь-ба, какъ  
With pilgrim's staff, with wear - y gait, With gloom-y brows and eyes un - see - ing, And like a

Example 2. The imitative “fate” motif in Rachmaninoff’s Op. 21, No. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Allison C. Luff, “Charles Ives and Musical Borrowing” (MM diss., Western University, 2012), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Steven Ledbetter, “Manuel de Falla: *El sombrero de tres picos* for Soprano and Orchestra,” *Santa Rosa Symphony*, program note, last modified April 2016, <https://www.srsymphony.org/EventDetail/19>.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Franklin, *Reclaiming Late-Romantic Music: Singing Devils and Distant Sounds* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2014), 33.

However, even Beethoven did not always innovate in music. He also looked back at the past similar to other composers in order to write music, and his major inspiration from the past was J.S. Bach. Beethoven expressed his admirations to Bach in his letters.

“For the beautiful pieces by Sebastian Bach I thank you very much; I will *keep and study* them. If there are to be further publications, send me them too.” (Vienna, April 8, 1803, to Breitkopf and Härtel)<sup>10</sup>

In particular, Beethoven was exceedingly affected by Bach’s fugues. Bach used the fugal technique to develop the Fugue as a genre, composing such Fugues like the ones from the Well-Tempered Clavier, BWV 846-893 (1722-42), and *The Art of Fugue*, BWV 1080 (1742-46).<sup>11</sup> Similar to Bach who composed *The Art of Fugue* in his later life, Beethoven wrote *Grosse Fugue* in B-flat Major, Op. 133 for string quartet in his later life, 1825-26. However, rather than composing in the Fugue genre, Beethoven integrated fugal technique in his music, especially for the last movement like Cello Sonata in D Major, Op. 102, No. 2 (1815), Piano Sonata Op. 110 in A-flat Major (1820-22), Symphony No. 9. He also combined fugue and variation together, such as in Fifteen Variations and a Fugue on an Original Theme in E-flat Major, Op. 35 “Eroica Variations” (1802), and the thirty-seconds variation from Thirty-Three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli in C Major, Op. 120 (1819-23).<sup>12</sup> By experimenting the fugal technique, Beethoven created his own compositional voice for fugue which was affected by Bach. By expanding the formal structure of music, Beethoven proved that he is one of the most innovative and influential figures in classical music, so his influence on the future generation has never stopped, even until

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<sup>10</sup> Elinore L. Barber, “Beethoven on Bach: Excerpts from Letters,” *Bach* 1, no. 4 (1970): 6, [www.jstor.org/stable/41639797](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41639797).

<sup>11</sup> Christoph Wolff, and Walter Emery, “Bach, Johann Sebastian,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed August 6, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph Kerman, Alan Tyson, Scott G. Burnham, Douglas Johnson, and William Drabkin, “Beethoven, Ludwig van,” *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed August 6, 2020.

today. Juri Seo, a young Korean woman composer, is no exception to Beethoven's far reaching influence.

### *Juri Seo*

A composer and pianist based in Princeton, New Jersey, Juri Seo was born in South Korea in 1981. She has been serving as an Assistant Professor of Music in Composition at Princeton University since 2014. After studying with Cheong Mook Kim (b. 1946) at Yonsei University (Seoul, BM), she attended the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Italy with Ivan Fedele (b. 1953). She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she studied with Reynold Tharp (b. 1973), who became her most influential teacher.

Seo's musical journey started when she was very young, when she first learned to play the piano from her mother, an amateur pianist who taught music to young children. One of Seo's fondest memories is that of playing the piano and making up songs in her mother's piano studio that had five pianos without soundproofing. It must have certainly created a cacophonous mess with five children banging on the pianos at once, however this was her favorite activity as a child. Around the age of 13 or 14, Seo started to take private lessons with a professional musician and decided to become a composer. This is also when she began her training in musical harmony and counterpoint.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Juri Seo, Email to Kwoon Lee, August 3, 2019.



Although she was born and was educated in South Korea until her undergraduate degree, she trained as a Western musician. The Western influence dominates her musical style, which is eclectic and complex.

She seeks to write music that encompasses extreme contrast through compositions that are unified and fluid, yet complex. She merges many of the fascinating aspects of music from the past century—in particular its expanded timbral palette and unorthodox approach to structure—with a deep love of functional tonality, counterpoint, and classical form. With its fast-changing tempi and dynamics, her music explores the serious and the humorous, the lyrical and the violent, the tranquil and the obsessive.<sup>14</sup>

Seo's teacher Reynold Tharp became her greatest proponent for her future career as a composer, by helping her to build a distinctive musical style. According to her email correspondence, although "he was not particularly energetic or optimistic the way most good teachers are, and he did not give compliments often," she calls him a great teacher because he simply showed her what could be improved. More than any other trend, the European spectral music deeply influenced Tharp, so he introduced Seo to the music of Tristan Murail (b. 1947) and Marc-André Dalbavie (b. 1961), which she now loves as well. The technique of blurring boundaries is one of the most useful and specific lessons that she learned from Tharp, usually by careful orchestration or composed resonances. For example, at the beginning of *vi* for piano and percussion, Seo blurs the boundaries between A major and A minor chords. This blurring expands to meta-stylistic exploration as well in the climax, which contains a slanted quote of Richard Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra," which Seo calls the epitome of major-minor ambiguity.<sup>15</sup> When Seo started to find her own compositional voice toward the end of her studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Tharp supported her even though her compositions turned out to be quite different from his own music. Seo's compositional

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<sup>14</sup> "About," Juri Seo, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.juriseomusic.com/about>.

<sup>15</sup> Juri Seo, "vi," program note, accessed August 16, 2019, <https://www.juriseomusic.com/music#/vibraphone/>.

influences at university extended not only to Professor Tharp, but also many other faculty members at her school, who she also studied with and influenced her to develop an eclectic style. Erik Lund (b. 1958) introduced Seo to jazz,<sup>16</sup> as well as Zack Browning, (b. 1953) whose music has been described as “way-cool in attitude...speed-demon music” by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and “propulsive, giddy, rocking... a rush of cyclic riffs and fractured meters” by The New York Times.<sup>17</sup> To some musical ears, Seo’s music from this period might even be described as funky. Tharp’s and other teachers’ influence helped Seo to construct her own distinctive voice in her musical compositions while aiding her in becoming an active, prolific, and successful composer. Her composition honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Koussevitzky Commission from the Library of Congress, a Goddard Lieberman Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Kate Neal Kinley Memorial Fellowship, Copland House Residency Award, and the Otto Eckstein Fellowship from Tanglewood. She has received commissions from the Fromm Foundation, Barlow Endowment, Tanglewood Music Center, the 21st Century Piano Commission Competition from the University of Illinois, and the Renée B. Fisher Piano Competition. Since 2009, she has been a composition fellow at the Tanglewood, Bang on a Can, and SoundSCAPE festivals, the Wellesley Composers Conference, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts.<sup>18</sup>

Seo’s eclectic and complex musical styles reveal themselves throughout her compositions. She composes chamber music with untraditional combinations of instrumental groups, like *#three* for piano, percussion, and double bass; *Rondeau*, *Ostinato*, and *Fantasia* for

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<sup>16</sup> Juri Seo, Email to Kwoon Lee, August 3, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> “About Zack Browning,” Zack Browning, accessed August 26, 2019, <https://zackbrowning.github.io/documentation/about-zack-browning.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Juri Seo, “About.”

piano/harpsichord, percussion, clarinet, saxophone, violin, and cello; and Concerto for 16 Brass and 2 Percussionists. However, the most prolific genre where Seo shows her distinctive musical style is piano music. In particular, she focused exclusively on writing piano music for three years from 2015 to 2017. She released her debut album “Mostly Piano,” in which she was featured as both composer and pianist by Innova Recordings in 2017. Her album consists of music for solo piano, solo cimbalom, and chamber music with piano, such as *#three* for piano, percussion, and double bass and *vi* for piano and percussion. The two pieces for solo piano in her album are *Three Mini Etudes in C*, her first piano piece written in 2011, and Piano Sonata No. 1 “La Hammerklavier” written in 2015 and 2016. Her album “Mostly Piano” received many positive reviews: “Through the piano, that most traditional of musical filters, Seo pours her eclectic influences and the results are coherent, but refracted and many-hued: Beethoven meets 20th-century avant-garde meets modern jazz. She scales the heights and plumbs the depths of the instrument...”<sup>19</sup> A classical music critic, Joshua Kosman said “the extraordinary charm and inventiveness of composer Juri Seo’s piano music come into view within the first 10 seconds of this ingratiating compilation disc, as a brisk handful of chords keeps getting knocked off-kilter by a single dissonant note. [...] Also on display is a deep dive into the history of the instrument in the form of her Piano Sonata No. 1, which is subtitled “La Hammerklavier” and offers a winning gloss — sometimes abstract, sometimes point-by-point — on Beethoven’s legacy.”<sup>20</sup>

Other piano pieces that Seo composed include *Concertino* for Piano and Chamber Orchestra, *Doremi Variations* for solo piano in 2015, Piano Concerto “Old Nassau,” *Prelude In*

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<sup>19</sup> Anya Wassenberg, “New Music: Juri Seo: Mostly Piano (Innova Recordings, Apr 28, 2017),” Art & Culture Maven, last modified June 11, 2017,

<https://www.artandculturemaven.com/2017/06/new-music-juri-seo-mostly-piano-innova.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Joshua Kosman, “Juri Seo: Mostly Piano,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 12, 2017, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/music/article/Juri-Seo-Mostly-Piano-11283830.php>.

*C for Piano Four Hands* in 2016, *Pianori for Children's Piano Four Hands*, and *More Semi-Simple Variations, Intermezzo, and Fugue on a Theme by Milton Babbitt* for Piano in 2017.

Among her four pieces for solo piano, *Three Mini Etudes in C*, *Doremi Variations*, Piano Sonata No. 1 "La Hammerklavier" and *More Semi-Simple Variations, Intermezzo, and Fugue on a Theme by Milton Babbitt*, two pieces clearly reveal Beethoven's influence: *Doremi Variations* and Piano Sonata No. 1 "La Hammerklavier." As she named her piano sonata "La Hammerklavier" after Beethoven's Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 106 "Hammerklavier" (1818), a comparison to Beethoven is inevitable.

Along with two of Seo's musical works for solo piano, *Doremi Variations* and Piano Sonata No. 1 "La Hammerklavier," this paper examines how she uses Beethoven's influence in her compositions and what connection exists between Seo and Beethoven under three categories of the compositional technique: motivic development, reference, and quotation. The first category, motivic development, is one of Beethoven's most distinctive compositional techniques. Does Seo use the "fate" motif in her music like other composers, or borrow another one of Beethoven's motifs? How does she show a motif or motifs in her music? This paper will examine those questions. The second category, reference, is a technique where composers borrow musical ideas or styles from others and modify them with their own voices, similar to how Beethoven did with fugue. A discussion about Seo's use of reference demonstrates how she synthesizes Beethoven's musical idea into her own eclectic compositional style. The last category is quotation, which is exactly borrowed from a part or parts of other music. Throughout this paper's examination of Seo's use of quotation, it shows which parts Seo directly quotes Beethoven's music. Before getting into the specific categories, this paper will briefly introduce *Doremi Variations* and "La Hammerklavier" Sonata.

## *Doremi Variations*

Seo composed this piece in the fall of 2015. As the title suggests, the piece is written in variation form, but not in a typical theme and variation form—a piece in a theme and variation starts with a theme, generally eight to sixteen bars long, for variations, with each variation altering or changing in some way throughout the piece. However, *Doremi Variation* starts the first variation without a theme. Instead of opening the piece with a theme, *Doremi Variations* uses the simple motif “do-re-mi” and the motif unifies the unpredictability in this music, which is related to the first category, motivic development. Later, this paper examines how Seo uses the “do-re-mi” motif to unify the piece. The piece consists of three variations in which the first two variations are much shorter than the third variation: the 25 measures of Variation I, the 17 measures of Variation II, and the 189 measures of Variation III. Both Variation I (measures 1 to 25) and II (mm. 26-42) have two sections that start in B major and end in D-flat major. Both variations begin with an Allegro tempo, Allegro vivace in Variation I and Allegro agitato in Variation II, and change tempi to Largo espressivo (Table 1).

	Variation I (mm. 1-25)		Variation II (mm. 26-42)	
Tempo	Allegro vivace	Largo espressivo	Allegro agitato	Largo espressivo
Key	B major	D-flat major	B major	D-flat major
Measure	mm. 1-19	mm. 20-25	mm. 26-37	mm. 38-42

*Table 1. The Structure of Variation I and II: Tempo, Key and Measure numbers.*

Variation III is the longest variation in the piece. Seo uses four sections, instead of two sections like Variation I and II. The tempi are more varied than the first two variations, and there are also fughetta and codetta sections (Table 2).

Variation III (mm. 43-231)				
Tempo	Largo semplice	Presto	Allegro	Andante grazioso
Key	B major – D-flat major			
Structure	Fughetta 1	Fughetta 2	Fughetta 2	Codetta
Measure	mm. 43-126	mm. 127-167	mm. 168-223	mm. 224-231

Table 2. *The Structure of Variation III: Tempo, Key, Structure, and Measure numbers.*

### ***Piano Sonata No. 1 “La Hammerklavier”***

Hans von Bülow (1830-1894) considered Beethoven’s piano sonatas to be the New Testament following the Old Testament, J.S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*.<sup>21</sup> Beethoven’s Op. 106 “Hammerklavier” Sonata is usually described as one of Beethoven’s masterworks, while at the same time esoteric because the piece is so enigmatic and convoluted. This paradox has intrigued future generations, who have sought a greater understanding of the work. Some composers hold a different perspective however, like Juri Seo.

In Beethoven’s Op. 106 “Hammerklavier” Sonata, rather than hearing the distant, God-given genius of musical legend, I hear an individual confronting the full extent of his limitations. The music toils at the edge of its creator’s potential. Beethoven’s self-imposed challenges of maintaining structural integrity—despite an ever-expanding form, complex tonal syntax, and painstaking counterpoint—fight with the mad force of his musical subconscious. The result is a remarkable heightening of expression: tempestuous, tender, and wickedly comic. (Not surprisingly, Op. 106 is notoriously difficult to play; its wide

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<sup>21</sup> Alan Walker, *Hans von Bülow: A Life and Times* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 341.

leaps and dense material demand not only technical virtuosity, but the courage to face the possibility of a massive public failure.)<sup>22</sup>

Seo composed her Piano Sonata No. 1, "La Hammerklavier" in the winter of 2015-2016.

This sonata includes two movements with specific titles: I. La Hammerklavier and II. Ricercare.

She dedicated this work to the pianist Steven Beck, who recorded it on Mostly Piano in April 2016. The premier live performance was held several months later, in December 2016 by Eric Huebner.<sup>23</sup>

The first movement "La Hammerklavier" eclectically quotes all four movements of Op. 106 with some alterations of the original's affect, which is frequently humorous and witty.<sup>24</sup> This movement is in sonata form with exposition, development, recapitulation, and coda sections, though Seo does not follow the traditional sonata form with typical key relationships and thematic divisions. She cleverly utilizes Beethoven's themes and keys in this movement to create the allusions to tonality as well as to the structure of sonata form. The first movement is self-contained and "can be programmed by itself" because of the long length and difficulty.<sup>25</sup>

The second movement is titled "Ricercare." The word "ricercare" means literally "to search for" and historically a "musical composition for instruments in which one or more themes are developed through melodic imitation; it was prominent in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries."<sup>26</sup> This movement consisting of a theme and ten variations with a long introduction, "Ricercare," includes both literal and historical meanings. It searches for the third movement, Adagio, of Op.

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<sup>22</sup> Juri Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1, 'La Hammerklavier,'" program note, accessed July 9, 2019, <https://www.juriseomusic.com/music#/lahammerklavier/>.

<sup>23</sup> "Piano Sonata No. 1 'La Hammerklavier,'" Music, Juri Seo, accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.juriseomusic.com/music#/lahammerklavier/>.

<sup>24</sup> Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1."

<sup>25</sup> Juri Seo, Email to Kwoon Lee, April 10, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, "ricercare," accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/ricercare>.

106, and it develops what it finds contrapuntally.<sup>27</sup> Seo aims for the movement to capture the feeling of listening to Op. 106 in a dream, and not being able to remember it precisely.<sup>28</sup> In order to reach this goal, she opens the movement with the 91 measures of long introduction. The introduction starts *Largo espressivo* and generally maintains the slow tempo throughout the introduction; however, at the same time, there are many indications of the tempo changes such as *poco piú animato*, *poco accelerando*, *molto ritardando*, etc., and the meter changes between duple and triplet, which makes the introduction be dreamy and nebulous (Example 3).

**II. Ricercare**  
ca. 16 minutes

508 *Largo espressivo* (♩ = 48) *pp* *Ped.* *dolce*

518 *poco piú animato* *pp* *poco rit. a tempo*

526 *rit.* *poco accel.* *molto rit.* ♩ = 26 *p* *pp legato*

Example 3. The dreamy and nebulous introduction of the second movement “ricercare,” mm. 508-530.

<sup>27</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

<sup>28</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”



In reference to the title “La Hammerklavier,” one might clearly notice that Op. 106 “Hammerklavier” overtly reflects on this sonata even before scrutinizing it. Seo declared that she used Op. 106 as a focusing lens to compose her “La Hammerklavier” sonata; however, her “La Hammerklavier” sonata is not “about” Op. 106.<sup>29</sup> This piece will be introduced through many references from Op. 106—what elements Seo borrowed, how she uses them in the piece, and what she ultimately creates.

### *Motivic Development*

Seo begins her “La Hammerklavier” sonata with the famous opening leap theme of Op. 106 and distorts it harmonically and rhythmically, as opposed to other composers, Ives, Falla, and Rachmaninoff, who borrowed Beethoven’s “fate” motif in their music. The left hand plays a B-flat major chord like the opening of Op. 106, while at the same time the right hand plays the “wrong” chord, B major. The tripping rhythm of the theme with sudden changes of meter resembles a bad performance (Example 4).<sup>30</sup>

The image contains two musical excerpts. The left excerpt is titled "Allegro" with a tempo marking of a quarter note = 138. It shows the first two measures of Beethoven's opening theme in B-flat major, marked *ff*. The right excerpt is titled "Allegro vivace" with a tempo marking of a quarter note = 92. It shows the first three measures of Seo's opening motif, marked *ff*, *p*, *non legato*, and *ff*. The right excerpt features complex rhythmic patterns and meter changes (3/8, 5/8, 6/8, 8/8). A pedal instruction "Ped. (conventional pedal throughout)" is written below the right excerpt.

Example 4. Beethoven’s opening theme in the first movement of Op. 106 mm. 1-2 (left), and Seo’s opening motif in the first movement of “La Hammerklavier” Sonata, mm. 1-3 (right)

<sup>29</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

<sup>30</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

This opening leap motif appears in one of the slow espressivo sections, *Andante espressivo* (mm. 217-240). The opening motif is in the same keys, B-flat major and B major, and this fragment of the motif primarily occurs in this section. Seo transforms the fragment to suit the slow section. The right hand follows the original and the left hand decorates the lyrical line with the same harmonic structures, B major to F# dominant seventh. These two measures (mm. 217-218) reappear in the next two measures (mm. 219-220) at one octave lower. Right after this, the gesture of playing chords in both hands comes back with the same rhythm, but in the different tempo, dynamics, and harmonies—in polytonality, C# minor and F# dominant seventh at m. 221 and D-sharp half-diminished seventh at m. 222 (Example 5).

Example 5. The first slow espressivo section, *Andante espressivo*, mm.216-224.

At m. 313 in the first movement, the first three beats play the same gesture—playing chords of the opening leap motif—so, the part gives some impressions that a recapitulation might start. However, the chords are not in the “right” keys of polytonal, B-flat major and B major, and from beat four do not follow the exposition. Therefore, m. 313 is still a part of the development and the recapitulation does not happen yet (Example 6).

Example 6. The opening leap motif, mm. 313-314.

The opening motif comes back in *Allegro vivace* at m. 356. This measure also seems to be the beginning of the recapitulation; however, the right hand has a B-flat major chord and the left hand has a B major chord, which is flipped and thus in the “wrong” key (Example 7).<sup>31</sup>

Example 7. The opening motif comes back in the “wrong” key, mm. 355-358.

The “wrong” key is corrected in m. 374, where the real recapitulation finally begins (Example 8). Having arrived at the recapitulation, Seo brings a challenge to the idea of key resolution from the traditional sonata form. Unlike a traditional sonata, the recapitulation of this sonata struggles and fails to resolve the tonal tension to show the characteristics of this piece—

<sup>31</sup> Seo, Email.

struggle, failure, and humor after all.<sup>32</sup> There is one brief moment to reconcile the harmonic struggle in mm. 453-455, which is the only place that the quotation from Op. 106 is mostly unaltered (Example 9).<sup>33</sup> This movement finishes with an ebullient coda following the recapitulation.

Example 8. Recapitulation with the “right” keys in B-flat and B major, mm. 374-380.

Example 9. Coda with the harmony reconciliation  
—the unaltered quotation from Op. 106, mm. 452-456.

<sup>32</sup> Seo, Email.

<sup>33</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

Motivic development dominates in the section of a theme and variations from the second movement “ricercare” of the “La Hammerklavier” sonata. After the long dreamy introduction (Example 1), a theme and variations section starts at m. 600. In the same manner as when Seo writes the opening leap motif in the “wrong” key earlier in the first movement, the short theme for the variations is also “wrong.”<sup>34</sup> The first two measures of the theme (is called motif 1 in this paper) is borrowed from the top melodic line at mm. 14-15 in the third movement of Op. 106 (Example 10); however, there is no same borrowing material for the rest of the theme. The next passage, which is called motif 2, consists of a stepwise descending line followed by an octave leap. The middle line at mm. 600-601 is overlapping and continues to the bass line in the next measure, which is called motif 3. (Example 11).

Example 10. The top melodic line at mm. 14-15 in the third movement of Op. 106, mm. 12-16.

**TEMA**  
**Largo molto cantabile ed espressivo** (♩ = 60)

Example 11. The “wrong” theme and three motifs, mm. 600-604.

<sup>34</sup> Seo, Sonata.

Ten variations on this “wrong” theme follow. The first variation, *Animato*, contains sixteenth notes in the right hand and the accompaniment with eighth notes in the left hand. All three motifs appear in the right hand (Example 12).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled 'VAR. I. Animato (♩ = 66)', covers measures 604 to 608. It features a right-hand melody of sixteenth notes and a left-hand accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system, labeled 'VAR. II. Allegro vivace (♩ = 144)', covers measures 608 to 609. It features a right-hand melody of eighth notes and a left-hand accompaniment of sixteenth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p dolce*, *pp*, *p*, and *f*, as well as articulation like accents and slurs.

Example 12. Variation I, mm. 604-609.

The second variation, *Allegro vivace*, contains a melody in the right hand and a fast accompanimental rhythm in the left hand (Example 12). All three motifs are included in the top line of the melody, but their rhythms are varied. The thirty-second note rhythm of the accompaniment is continued even though the second variation is finished. Besides having no new tempo marking, the third variation can be considered a prolongation of the second variation

because they share the same musical elements. The melody in the third variation is derived from motif 2: the stepwise descending line (Example 13).

Example 13. Variation III, mm. 616-617.

The fourth variation opens with motif 2 at m. 625, which has two-notes slurs in *molto espressivo*. The next measure not only changes meters from 6/8 to 4/8, but also has different articulation, *staccato* with *leggiero*, and different tempi, from *Largo* to *piú mosso*. This sudden change of gesture at mm. 625-626 is written again at mm. 627-628 with variation: the extra voice of thirds in triplets at m. 627 and the single line with scales marked *non-legato* at m. 628 instead of the leaping line with sixth intervals (m. 626). Despite the differences, motif 2 is still in the top voice. The fourth variation finishes with motif 3 in the right hand (Example 14).

Example 14. Variation IV, mm. 625-630.

The sixth variation, Allegro con affetto, consists of a long lyrical melody which includes all three motifs along with a chromatic passage in the inner voice. The melody augments the rhythm of motif 1 at mm. 656-659 and at mm. 664-667, while the bass voice contains motif 2. Motif 3 appears in the melody later at m. 668 (Example 15).

Example 15. Motif 1 in the right hand and motif 2 in the left hand in Variation VI, mm. 656-659.

Seo creates a new motif in a climactic tenth variation, Presto: the BECH motif. BECH is a cipher—O.V. Surminova suggests calling this “musical onamophony”—in which Seo



combines two names J.S. Bach and Beck.<sup>35</sup> Not only does she use their names to create the motif, but she also applies Bach's gigue style and dedicates this sonata to the pianist Steve Beck. The two notes in the BECH motif, B-flat and B, perfectly exemplify the Bb-B struggle in Op. 106 and it brings a little nod to Beck.<sup>36</sup> The gigue theme is stated several times on the top of the BECH motif's pedal point (Example 16).

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. It is labeled 'VAR. X.' and starts at measure 790. The tempo is 'Presto' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats. The time signature is 3/8. The score is in two staves: treble and bass. The bass clef part has a 'BECH' motif circled in red, with a 'sostenuto ped.' marking below it. The treble clef part has a 'gigue BACH?' motif circled in purple, with a 'fff' dynamic marking above it. The piece concludes with a 'fff' dynamic marking.

Example 16. The pedal point of the BECH motif along with Bach's gigue style, mm. 790-793.

At mm. 807-809, Seo restores the opening leap motif of the first movement in this sonata in the G-sharp fully diminished seventh chords. These three measures manifest a transition to the next part, where the gigue theme starts again with the octave in both hands on the top of another pedal point—with all notes a half step lower than the BECH motif (Example 17).

<sup>35</sup> Yevheniia Cherniak, Maryna Biletska, Irina Barantsova, Viktoriia Mitlytska, and Tetyana Pidvarko, "Transformation of Sound Cipher Complexes in the History of Musical Art and Their Specific Manifestations in the Work of Composers of the 17th - 21st Centuries," *Journal of History, Culture & Art Research / Tarih Kültür ve Sanat Arastirmalari Dergisi* 8, no. 2 (June 2019): 305, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7596/taksad.v8i2.2001>.

<sup>36</sup> Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1."

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 807-811. The score is in 6/8 time and features a complex texture with multiple voices. Two red circles highlight specific motifs: one in the upper voice at the beginning and another in the lower voice near the 'sostenuto ped.' marking.

Example 17. The opening rhythm from the first movement, and the pedal point, mm. 807-811.

The opening leap motif of the first movement and the three motifs for the variations of the second movement clearly reveal Beethoven's influence because the motifs are derived from Beethoven's Op. 106. Although Seo creates the BECH motif, it closely connects with Beethoven regarding the influence of Bach who was idolized by Beethoven.

Then, in *Doremi Variation*, how Seo uses the simple "do-re-mi" motif in the manner of the motivic development? The simple motif "do-re-mi" constantly appears in many ways throughout the piece. The piece starts with the "do-re-mi" motif in the top voice and the motif reappears in the different notes (Example 18).

**VAR. I**  
**Allegro vivace**

*non legato*

*p dolce* *pp* *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

*light pedal for slurred notes only*

*a tempo*

*pp* *leggiero* *espressivo* *leggiero* *molto espressivo*

Example 18. The “do-re-mi” motif, mm. 1-7.

Even when the tempo changes, the motif “do-re-mi” still appears. Seo finishes Variation I by extending the motif in different pitch ranges. “Do-re-mi” appears not only in the top voice as before, but now in differing pitch ranges. At mm. 24-25, the statements of the motif are overlapped and organically bound to one another, connecting in a continuous natural contingency. This is an anticipation of Variation II (Example 19).

Example 19. The “do-re-mi” motif with the change of tempi and the overlapping of the motif, mm. 18-25.

Seo opens Variation II with the “do-re-mi” motif as same as Variation I: B-C sharp-D sharp. However, the notes of the motif in Variation II are one octave lower than the notes of the motif in Variation I (Example 20).

Example 20. The same notes, but in different pitch ranges, m. 1 and m. 26

She uses three other instances of the “do-re-mi” motif in this variation. The first one is the voicing and continuing; the voicing means that the “do-re-mi” motif appears not only in the top line but in also inner line and bass line. As example 19 shows that the overlapped motif

appears in both hands, the “do-re-mi” motif in Variation II is overlapped and continuous, not just only in one voice, but also in the right hand and left hand at m. 28. The second occurrence of the motif is presented as a retrograde inversion, which normally occurs in the left hand. She uses the doubling of the retrograde inversion motif before the transition of the tempo and texture change. Juri’s doubling of the retrograde inversion at m. 30 signals the tempo and texture change of the next section. The last occurrence of the motif is fragmented, where the motif only includes a partial interval of solfège “do-re.” The subtle changes in mm. 27-28 are brought about by the fragmented motif appearing in the inner voice with a faster rhythm. However, a more obvious appearance of the motif occurs at mm. 29-30 when the fragmented motif in the right hand joins with the retrograde inversion motif in the left hand (Example 21).

The image shows a musical score for Variation II, marked 'Allegro agitato'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 25 to 28. The second system covers measures 29 to 31. The score is written for piano, with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes from 4/4 to 3/4 and back to 4/4. The 'do-re-mi' motif is highlighted with colored circles: red circles in measures 26, 27, and 28; yellow circles in measures 27, 28, and 30; green circles in measures 28 and 30; and purple circles in measures 29, 30, and 31. Dynamic markings include 'mf cresc.' at the start of measure 26, 'f' at the start of measure 29, and 'mf' at the start of measure 30. There are also sextuplet markings '6' in measures 29 and 30.

Example 21. Three instances of the “do-re-mi” motif in Variation II, mm. 26-31.

Seo extends the length of Variation III four times longer than the first two variations, adding a searching, experimental section to her composition. These 189 measures of variation include two fughettas and one codetta. The “do-re-mi” motif constantly recurs in all four voices in a *Largo semplice* tempo (Example 22).

Var. III  
Largo semplice 3

Example 22. The “do-re-mi” motif in all four voices in *Largo semplice*, mm. 44-50.

The first fughetta starts at m. 61, where Seo develops the “do-re-mi” motif as a subject in order to correspond with the style of fughetta. *Piú animato* starts with the notes F-G-A flat, the “do-re-mi” motif, and adds more sixteenth notes to create the subject of fughetta. The subject of fughetta appears in all three voices. The original subject occurs in sixteenth notes values at mm. 61-62 in the top voice. The subject appears in the middle voice at mm. 62-63, while the top voice plays the “do-re-mi” motif, and again moves to the bottom voice (Example 23).

Example 23. The subject of the first fughetta in all three voices, mm. 61-65.

This subject appears within various rhythmic note values in all three voices. In *poco più animato* (mm. 65-74), the subject stretches from sixteenth note values to eighth notes in the right hand: two times in the original progression and one time in inversion. At mm. 75-78, Seo then further lengthens the note value of the subject to quarter notes in the bottom part, while keeping the subject in other voices with sixteenth note and eighth note values. Suddenly, Seo switches to a thirty-second note presentation of the subject at m. 84 (Example 24).

The image displays a musical score for Example 24, illustrating the subject in various rhythmic presentations across four systems of music. The score is in a key with three flats and a 3/4 time signature.

- System 1 (mm. 64-74):** Labeled *poco più animato*. The right hand features the subject in eighth notes, circled in red. A red arrow points to the subject in the bass line. The instruction *cresc. poco a poco* is present.
- System 2 (mm. 70-74):** The right hand continues with eighth notes, circled in red.
- System 3 (mm. 75-78):** Labeled *più animato* ( $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 60$ ). The bass line features the subject in quarter notes, circled in red. The instruction *cresc. poco a poco* is present, and a *pedal* marking is in the bass line.
- System 4 (mm. 81-85):** Labeled *L'istesso tempo, con moto*. The right hand features the subject in thirty-second notes, circled in green. The instruction *ff* is present.

Red annotations highlight the subject in eighth notes in the first system and quarter notes in the third system. A green annotation highlights the subject in thirty-second notes in the fourth system.

Example 24. The various rhythms of the subject, mm. 65-85.

At m. 168, Seo transforms the subject to a syncopated rhythm simultaneously with the “do-re-mi” motif (Example 25). Seo also utilizes the retrograde inversion of the “do-re-mi” motif in codetta, *Andante grazioso*, from m. 224 to the end (Example 26).

168 **Allegro**

*p non legato, chill*

Example 25. A syncopated rhythm of the subject, mm. 168-177.

224 **Andante grazioso**

*p*

*rit.*

*pp*

Example 26. The retrograde inversion of the “do-re-mi” motif in codetta, mm. 224-231.

The “do-re-mi” motif shows in diverse forms with restating in different pitches and voice lines, variations in the rhythm, inversion, retrograding, and developing as a fuggetta subject. Similar to Beethoven who developed the opening theme of Op. 106 to the fugue subject in the development (Example 27), Seo also develops the simple “do-re-mi” motif to the fuggetta subject as like example 23.



The image displays three systems of musical notation for piano. The first system (measures 137-140) shows a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has dynamics *ff*, *fp*, *f*, and *p*. The bass staff has dynamics *ff*, *fp*, *f*, and *p*. The second system (measures 139-142) shows a bass staff with dynamics *sempre p*. The third system (measures 143-148) shows a bass staff with dynamics *cresc.* and *più cresc.*. Red circles highlight specific motifs in the treble and bass staves across the systems.

Example 27. The Developed opening theme of Op. 106 to the fugue subject, mm. 137-148.

The motivic development that she uses the motif in various rhythms, different pitches and voice lines also resembles Beethoven's compositional techniques in *Grosse Fugue* for string quartets.<sup>37</sup> The next category is reference which manifests Seo's eclectic musical style because reference means borrowing ideas, materials, and styles from other musical resources and modifying them—this is the same approach that Beethoven borrowed the style of fugue and used it with variation.

<sup>37</sup> Warren Kirkendale, "The 'Grate Fugue' Op. 133: Beethoven's 'Art of Fugue,'" *Acta Musicologica* 35, fasc. 1 (January-March, 1963): 14-24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/931606>.

## Reference

Beethoven's influence in Seo's music continues. After a short sequence of the first theme in the first movement of "La Hammerklavier" sonata, a new gesture is introduced: quintuplets in the left hand and a trill in the right hand (Example 28). The quintuplets in the left hand evoke the triplets in the left hand (mm. 100-105) from the first movement of Op. 106, and the trill in the right hand (mm. 106-11) comes from the same movement of Op. 106 (Example 29).

Example 28. A new gesture: quintuplets in the left hand and a trill in the right hand in "La Hammerklavier" sonata, mm. 14-16.

Example 29. The triplets in the left hand and a trill in the right hand in the first movement of Op. 106, mm. 100-111.

These two elements are the part of the second theme in the first movement of Op. 106, however, they are just one of the imitative elements in Seo's sonata. If these two elements become the second theme in the traditional sonata form, it should appear after the certain harmonic progression that shows the tonic and dominant key relationships in the major keys. Instead of following the traditional sonata form with typical key relationships, Seo uses these musical ideas right after the first theme without the tonic to dominant harmonic progression, proving that these two musical ideas, the trill and quintuplets, are not the second theme of her sonata.

Another reference from Op. 106 takes over from m. 28 for fifty-one measures as a long transition-like passage. The alternating hands figure of the sixteenth notes is similar to the end of the first theme group of Op. 106 (Example 30).

The image displays two musical excerpts. The top excerpt, titled "[Beethoven's Op. 106]", shows measures 31-36. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *dimin.*, *p*, *ritar.*, *dan*, *pp*, *do*, and *f*. The tempo is marked *a tempo*. The bottom excerpt, titled "[Seo's 'La Hammerklavier']", shows measures 71-84. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of sixteenth notes. Dynamics include *p*, *non legato*, and *ff*. The tempo is marked *Tempo I*. The key signature changes from one sharp to one flat. The time signature changes from 3/8 to 4/8. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Example 30. Another Beethoven quotation (mm. 31-36) from Op. 106:  
the alternating hands gesture in "La Hammerklavier" sonata, mm. 77-84.

In order to creating a smooth transition, Seo borrows the element from Op. 106. Two chords in *ff* deriving from the very end of the first movement of Op. 106 appear at mm. 105-108 along with a long trill. The six measures (mm. 104-109) with the borrowing musical materials serve as a short transition to the development section at m. 110, so as not to make the shift too jarring (Example 31).

The image displays two pages of musical notation. The left page, labeled '403', shows the end of a piece from Op. 106, with dynamics *ppp*, *cresc.*, and *ff*. A red box highlights the final chord. The right page shows measures 104-110 from 'La Hammerklavier' sonata. It features two systems: the first system is marked 'Allegro (♩ = 120)' and the second 'Presto (♩ = 144)'. Dynamics include *ff*, *sfz*, *p*, and *leggiere*. Red boxes highlight two chords in measures 105-108 that borrow from Op. 106.

Example 31. The last chord from Op. 106, mm. 404-5 (left), and a short transition with the two chords in the “La Hammerklavier” sonata, mm. 104-110 (right).

The Presto section, where the development starts, might remind the listener of the second movement, Scherzo, of Op. 106 (Example 32). The D major ascending scale at mm. 115-116 with *piú mosso* resembles the *prestissimo* at m. 112 of Op. 106 (Example 33). There is another inspiration from m. 49 in the Scherzo movement of Op. 106. The gesture, a melody in the right hand with accompaniment in the left hand, appears shortly at mm. 140-141 and is echoed at mm. 150-153. They have similarity in terms of not only gesture but also rhythm: the big three beats with triplet accompaniment (Example 34).

**Presto**

*p*

*cresc.*

*ff*

**Prestissimo**

Example 32. *Presto*, Op. 106, mm. 81-112.

*tr*

*sf*

*sf*

*p*

**Presto** ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

*p*

*leggiero*

*molto rit.*

*poco espr.*

**Piú mosso** ( $\text{♩} = 166$ )

*pp*

*non legato*

*a tempo* ( $\text{♩} = 144$ )

*p leggiero*

Example 33. The borrowing musical materials from Scherzo, Op. 106 in "La Hammerklavier" sonata, mm. 110-118.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of three flats and a common time signature. The first staff is marked 'semplice' and contains a melodic line with triplets and a 'cresc.' marking. The second staff is marked 'p' and contains a bass line with triplets and a 'cresc.' marking. The second system also consists of two staves, starting at measure 149. The first staff is marked 'pp' and contains a melodic line with a 'non legato' marking. The second staff is marked 'p' and contains a bass line with a 'non legato' marking. Red brackets highlight specific melodic phrases in both systems.

Example 34. The gesture from Op. 106, mm.49-54 (top),  
and the gesture in the “La Hammerklavier” sonata, mm. 150-153.

Similar to example 5 that Andante *espressivo* starts with the opening leap motif, Andante con moto (m. 227) also begins with the same motif. While the fragment of the motif primarily occurs in the section, it seems like that a new musical idea, two sixteenths and one eighth note in stretto, introduces at the same time (Example 35). However, the musical idea of the stretto passages can be found in the development of the first movement of Op. 106 (Example 36).

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system starts at measure 225 and features a treble clef staff with a 5/8 time signature and a bass clef staff with a 5/8 time signature. The tempo markings are 'rit.', 'a tempo poco accel.', and 'Andante con moto (♩ = 108)'. The dynamic marking 'ff' is present. The second system starts at measure 228 and features a treble clef staff with a 5/8 time signature and a bass clef staff with a 5/8 time signature. The tempo marking is 'Meno mosso (♩ = 96)'. The dynamic marking 'p' is present. Red circles highlight specific melodic phrases in both systems, and green circles highlight other melodic phrases.

Example 35. The opening chords with a new passage in stretto, mm. 227-230.

Example 36. The stretto passages in the development of the first movement of Op. 106, mm. 133-143.

The stretto passages continue with the single melodic line instead of having the opening chords. This section is the first time that Seo adopts the full rhythm of the opening theme of Op. 106 (Example 4), with diminished note values. The melody in the right hands gets interrupted by the left hand with the same melody in different notes, and these passages evolve and reach to the climax of the passages at m. 235 with *molto pesante* (Example 37). This section, *Andante espressivo*, connects to the next slow section, *Largo espressivo*, that is derived from the third movement of Op. 106.

Example 37. The stretto passages in *Meno mosso*, mm. 231-235.

Seo echoes the part from Op. 106 that the left hand accompanies the right hand with triplet rhythms, while the right hand plays many notes in faster rhythms (Example 38).

25  
*espressivo*  
*cresc. - tutte le corde*  
*con grand'espressione*

29  
*p cresc. -*

32  
*cresc.*  
*pp*

**Largo espressivo** ( $\text{♩} = 38$ )

241 *poco accel.* ----- *molto rit.* *a tempo* *poco accel.* ----- *molto rit.*

*p* *hesitant, as if unable to remember*

To m. 249, take X2 more time for the notes with tenuto sign.

*a tempo* *poco accel.* ----- *molto rit.* *a tempo* *poco accel.* ----- *poco più animato* *no rit.* *tr*

243 *mp* *p* *mp*

**Più mosso** ( $\text{♩} = 42$ )

246 *p* *molto rit.* *a tempo*

Example 38. The right hand's melody in a fast rhythm with the left hand's accompaniment from Op. 106, mm. 25-33 (top), and from the "La Hammerklavier" sonata, mm. 241-247 (bottom).



There is another reference followed. From m. 246, the right hand plays a group of thirty-second notes with one octave while the left hand accompanies the right hand with steady beats (Example 39). This quotation is derived from the third movement of Op. 106 (Example 40).

246 *Più mosso* ( $\text{♩} = 42$ ) *molto rit. a tempo*

248 *Poco meno mosso*

250 *"appassionato e con molto sentimento"*

Example 39. Another Op. 106's reference, mm. 246-251.

93 *cresc.* *dimin.*

95 *p* *cresc.*

Example 40. The thirty-second notes in the right hand and the accompaniment with steady beat in the left hands, from the third movement of Op. 106, mm. 93-96.

When the section reaches its ending, Seo marks “*appassionato e con molto sentimento*” at m. 251 (Example 39), which directly comes from Beethoven’s marking in the third movement of Op. 106 (Example 41). These two slow *espressivo* sections abundantly has Seo’s own distinctive voice such as a change of tempi and dynamics based on Beethoven’s voice.

Example 41. *Adagio sostenuto*, the third movement of Op. 106, mm. 1-6.

Beethoven’s voice continues in the second movement of “La Hammerklavier” sonata. The eighth variation, *Animato*, starts with motif 1 in the left hand. Like m. 554 of the introduction, the other voice interrupts with *stretto*. Motif 3 continues similarly to m. 719 with syncopated rhythms. Motif 1 appears in octave doubling from m. 726, and the octave doubling shift to the left hand at m. 730 (Example 42). While the left hand shows motif 2, the right hand has sixteenth notes to support harmony—this passage resembles the part of Op. 106 (Example 43). Seo brings motif 2 once again in the top voice in the last two measures in this variation.

Example 42. The octave doubling with motif 1 and 2, mm. 727-731.

Example 43 is a musical score for piano and violin. The piano part is in the upper system, and the violin part is in the lower system. The score begins with a circled number 71. The piano part features a series of ascending and descending eighth-note patterns, with dynamic markings including *cresc.*, *poco a poco*, *due ed allora tutte le corde*, *f*, *sf*, and *una cor*. The violin part consists of a single melodic line with various articulations and dynamics. There are several asterisks and circled numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) indicating specific measures or techniques.

Example 43. Resemblance of the octave doubling, Op. 106, mm. 74-77.

Following the example of Beethoven's late sonatas such as the first movement of Op. 106 and the final movement of Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 101 (1816), this movement includes a fugal development section.<sup>38</sup> In Op. 106, Beethoven uses fugal development with the opening theme. The theme starts in one voice and adds each voice up to four parts (Example 44).

Example 44 is a musical score for piano, showing a fugal development section. The score is divided into six systems, each with a circled measure number (134, 139, 143, 148, 153, 161). The piano part is in the upper system, and the violin part is in the lower system. The score begins with a circled number 134. The piano part features a series of ascending and descending eighth-note patterns, with dynamic markings including *ff*, *p*, *cresc.*, and *piu cresc.*. The violin part consists of a single melodic line with various articulations and dynamics. There are several asterisks and circled numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) indicating specific measures or techniques.

Example 44. Beethoven's fugal development in the first movement of Op. 106, mm. 133-166.

<sup>38</sup> Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1."

Seo uses the same method for the fugal development section at m. 253, *Andante* in A Major, in the first movement of “La Hammerklavier” sonata—the first theme becomes a fugue subject, though she starts immediately with four voices (Example 45). The fugue subject appears with various rhythms of sixteenths, triplets, and thirty seconds notes for sixty measures.

The image shows a musical score for the fugal development section of the first movement of 'La Hammerklavier' sonata, measures 253-256. The score is in 4/4 time, marked 'Andante (♩ = 60)'. It features a fugue subject with four voices. The first voice is marked 'ppp' and the second voice is marked 'P dolce'. The score includes a red bracket labeled 'Fugal development' and a red line labeled 'tre corde'.

Example 45. The fugal development, mm. 253-256.

Beethoven’s other piano sonatas that Seo borrows the musical ideas are Op. 109 in E Major (1820) and Op. 101. Op. 109 consists of three movements, and the third movement is written in a theme and variation form. Finishing a sonata with a variation form was exceedingly unusual in the early nineteenth century. Additionally, the fifth variation of the third movement of Op. 109 includes a chorale-fugue, similar to how Seo also includes two fuguetas in the third variation of her *Doremi Variation*. In the second variation of the third movement in Op. 109, the sixteenth notes appear alternatively in both hands in 3/4 meter, marked *Leggiermente* (Example 46).

Var. II  
Leggiermente

*p*

*cresc.*

Example 46. Variation II from the third movement of Beethoven's Op. 109 in E Major.

From m. 20, Seo uses the same rhythm, the consistent sixteenth notes, and in the same meter, 3/4, marked “*leggiermente*,” while she changes the alteration order of the hands—Beethoven uses the first note in the left hand, next two notes in the right hand, then one last note in the left hand, while Seo uses the first note in the right hand, next two notes in the left hand, then one last note in the right hand (Example 47).

Adagio

19

*pp rubato*

*poco rit.*

*p*

*pp* "leggiermente"

op. 109

*rit.* . . . *Largo espressivo*

*rit.* . . . *meno mosso* *rit.* . . .

*p espr.*

*pedal*

22

Example 47. Beethoven's influence, mm. 20-23—Seo borrows the musical materials from Op. 109.

Another homage to Beethoven can be found in the last fughetta of *Doremi Variations*. Beethoven's Op. 101 influenced her to write the last part of the third variation. The last movement of Op. 101 is written as a highly contrapuntal fugue with the continuative four sixteenth notes along with one quarter note (Example 48).

Example 48. The continuative four sixteenth notes with one quarter note in the last movement of Beethoven's Op. 101, mm. 63-72.

Similar to Beethoven, Seo puts a fughetta in the last part to complete her variation. "Op. 101" is indicated in the printed score at m. 207. The borrowing musical material, the continuative four sixteenth notes with one quarter note, appears as a sequence while the top voice uses the "do-re-mi" motif (Example 49).

Example 49. "op. 101" indication and borrowing the material, mm. 203-212.

Beethoven's influence is more obvious when the left hand starts with two notes, D-flat and E-flat, like trill at m. 215. A pedal point occurs from m. 217 in the left hand. The C1 sustains for two measures, and the note slides up to D-flat for the next two measures (mm. 219-220), and then the lowest A plays for two measures to finish the pedal point. This is an example of motivic development that Seo shows the "do-re-mi" motif in the augmented note values and retrograde inversion. While the left hand clearly reveals Beethoven's influence, the right hand shows how Seo uses Beethoven's influence. The right hand plays the subject of fughetta (Example 50).

Example 50. Beethoven's influence—Seo uses two notes trill with the pedal point, mm. 213-223.

This recurring statements of the fughetta subject resemble the end of coda, the last movement of Op. 101 (Example 51).

Example 51. Coda of Beethoven's Op. 101, mm. 349-361.

The pedal point, C, B-flat, and A, creates a muddy sound and evokes the very shocking but astonishing E note in Op. 101 (Example 52).<sup>39</sup> Seo emulates the lowest E note, probably the lowest note on the piano at the time, of Beethoven's Op. 101 into her piece by using the lowest note A in modern piano.



Example 52. Beethoven's E note in the last movement of Op. 101, mm. 223-226.

As previous examples prove, Seo borrows many of Beethoven's musical ideas in her *Doremi Variations* and "La Hammerklavier" sonata. She inputs many diverse musical styles besides Beethoven, which reinforces her own compositional voices: complex and eclectic. According to Seo's program notes of *Doremi Variations*, there are many different musical styles in this piece: Chopinesque, jazz, pseudo-folk, pedal point, and culminating with an epic flourish of harmony.<sup>40</sup>

The most recognizable Chopinesque section that Seo uses in her *Doremi Variations* is the short six measures of transition. Seo writes *espressivo* and *dolce* to indicate how performers should play this delicate lyrical passage in the right hand while the left hand gives harmonic supports for the right hand with a simple rhythm (Example 53).

<sup>39</sup> Donald G. Gíslason, "Sonata in A major Op. 101," *Vancouver Recital Society*, program note, last modified February 18, 2015, <https://vanrecital.com/tag/sonata-in-a-major-op-101/>.

<sup>40</sup> Juri Seo, "Doremi Variations," program note, accessed October 5, 2017, <https://www.juriseomusic.com/music#/doremi/>.



Example 53. The most recognizable Chopinesque section, mm. 162-167.

This Chopinesque session resembles the section from Chopin's Scherzo No. 4 in E Major, Op. 54, written in 1842-43 (Example 54). The similar style can also be found in Chopin's Ballade No. 3 in A-flat Major, Op. 47 (1841), and the final movement of Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58 (184-45).

Example 54. Chopin's Scherzo No. 4 in E Major, Op. 54, mm. 94-124.

Another Chopinesque is elusively introduced in the first variation of *Doremi Variations*, where “molto rit.” starts at m. 18. The passage begins with a two-note slur of notes, B-flat and C, with *dolce* and it seems like the “do-re-mi” motif, but the note C turns to C-sharp, in a sharp twist to the solfège “do-re-ri.” These unexpected chromatic notes from C to C-sharp lead to chromatic quintuplets in Adagio with rubato. On the fourth beat at m. 19, a similar gesture like the fourth beat of m. 18 appears again, but the “do-re-mi” motif is fully written with a longer slur, transitioning to the second half of the first variation with the tempo change, *Largo espressivo* (Example 55). These short Chopinesque gestures link to the first part, where Seo directly shows Beethoven’s influence in this piece (Example 47).

Example 55. *The elusive Chopinesque section, mm. 18-20.*

Seo puts “rubato à la Chopin” in the first movement of her sonata, like she does “op. 101” and “op. 119” in her variation. This direct indication reveals that the music resembles a Chopinesque style. A flourish of a decorated melodic passage at mm. 21-22 will appear again at mm. 98-99 with “rubato à la Chopin” (Example 56).

meno mosso (♩ = 76) poco rit. . . . .

21 *pp delicate* *rubato à la Chopin* 48 32

Example 56. A Chopinesque style in “La Hammerklavier” sonata, mm. 21-22.

There is a similar style in the first movement of Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21, written in 1829-30 (Example 57).

16

145 *con forza* *cresc.* 18 3 2

*dim.*

147 *sempre più stretto* *ff pp leggerissimo*

*pp più stretto*

Example 57. The first movement of Chopin’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21, mm. 145-148.

One aspect of Jazz style is characterized by rhythmic manipulation, which can be frequently found in Seo's music. Seo uses irregular meters like 7/8 or 5/4, which is the main characteristic of Jazz. This feature is at mm. 112-113 where the meters are 11/64 and 12/64 in *Doremi Variations* (Example 58).

The image shows a musical score for piano, specifically measures 111 and 113 of a piece titled 'Doremi Variations'. Measure 111 is marked with a red circle around the 11/64 time signature. Measure 113 is marked with a red circle around the 12/64 time signature. The score includes a 'tempo rubato' marking and various musical notations such as notes, rests, and fingerings.

Example 58. The aspect of jazz: irregular meters in *Doremi Variations*, mm. 112-113.

Another important aspect of Jazz style is syncopation. This syncopated rhythm appears in the left hand for seven measures, until the pedal point of the D note happens (Example 59). This syncopation also applies to the fughetta subject at m. 168—example 25 shows that the fughetta subject in D-flat Major is paired with syncopated rhythmic figure. Seo decisively leads with a Jazz style in this section by marking *non legato*, *chill*, rather than just a taste of Jazz (Example 25).

135

141

146

*p subito*

Example 59. The aspect of jazz: syncopation, mm. 137-8 and mm. 142-148.

The end of the third variation in the second movement of “La Hammerklavier” sonata is another example to show how Seo uses the characteristics of Jazz style. She maintains the thirty-second notes, but inserts many rests. The resulting effect is syncopation, in the style of jazz. Poco ritardando at m. 622 and molto ritardando in the following measure lead to the next variation, Largo (Example 60).

621

*poco rit.*

*mf*

*p*

*espr.*

623

*molto rit.*

VAR. IV.  
Largo (♩ = 72)

*pp molto espressivo*

*più mosso*

*leggiero*

Example 60. Syncopation in Variation III, and ritardando to prepare Largo, mm. 621-626.

In *Doremi Variations*, the pseudo-folk passage at m. 94 continues for eleven measures. Rather than taking this passage from an original folk tune, Seo manipulates the fughetta subject to create this pseudo-folk passage. At m. 105, *Meno mosso*, an epic flourish of harmony and pedal point starts. While the left hand rings the note B-flat and F as a pedal point, the right hand plays the fast-rhythmic passage, described as “the epic flourish of harmony” (Example 61).<sup>41</sup>

The image displays a musical score for Example 61, consisting of four systems of music. The first system (measures 91-94) shows a pseudo-folk passage in the right hand, with a green circle around a note labeled 'folky'. The second system (measures 95-100) continues the pseudo-folk passage. The third system (measures 101-104) shows the continuation of the pseudo-folk passage. The fourth system (measures 105-107) is marked 'Meno mosso' and 'fff', featuring a fast rhythmic passage in the right hand and a pedal point in the left hand. Red circles highlight specific notes in the left hand across measures 94, 95, 105, and 106. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings.

Example 61. The pseudo-folk passage with the fughetta subject and the pedal point with the fast rhythmic passage in the right hand, mm. 94-107.

<sup>41</sup> Seo, “Doremi Variations.”

After the chromatic descending scale at m. 115, the section covers the wide range of keys from the lowest B flat note to the highest C note (Example 62).

The image displays a musical score for Example 62, spanning measures 115 to 121. The score is written for piano in 4/16 time. Measure 115 features a chromatic descending scale in the right hand, with a red arrow pointing to the first note and the text "The chromatic descending scale" below it. Measure 116 shows a continuation of the scale, with a red circle around the lowest B-flat note and the text "The lowest B-flat note" below it. Measure 117 includes a "tempo rubato" marking and a "sfz" dynamic. Measure 118 features a "sim. for each change of bass" marking and a "sfz" dynamic. Measure 119 is marked "allargando" and "fff sempre". Measure 120 is marked "sfz". Measure 121 is marked "sfz". The score includes various musical notations such as fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), slurs, and dynamic markings.

Example 62. The chromatic descending scale and the wide range of keys, mm. 115-121.

These musical materials, with the pseudo-folk passage, pedal point, and the epic flourish of harmony, harken back to Romanticism, especially Liszt. Additionally, the use of chromaticism and of the wide range of keys echoes Liszt's piano music. He composed the nineteen *Hungarian Rhapsody*, S. 244 (1846-85) for solo piano based on Hungarian folk music and gypsy music.<sup>42</sup> Besides folk music, other musical materials can also be found in Liszt's music (Example 63).

<sup>42</sup> Maria Eckhardt, Rena Charnin Mueller, and Alan Walker, "Liszt, Franz," *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed 10 August, 2020.

*egualmente*

34

2 5 3 8

35

*cresc.*

1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5

37

*diminuendo*

39

5 1 2 4 3 2 1 4 1 2 4 1 2

Ra. \*

Ra. \*

Ra. \*

Ra. \*

Ra. \*

Ra. \*



40 Allegretto capriccioso

45

51

Example 63. Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 10, mm. 34-55.

The last musical reference is Fugue. Seo uses the “do-re-mi” motif and develops it as the fughetta subject (Example 23), and then references the idea of musical structure, little fugue which is fughetta. The subject appears in presto at m. 127 where the second fughetta begins. The sixteenth notes of the subject never stop for 35 measures, up until the six measures of the short transition starts at m. 162 (Example 64).

The image shows a musical score for Example 64. It consists of two systems of music. The first system starts at measure 125, marked 'più mosso', and transitions to 'Presto' at measure 127. The tempo change is indicated by a double bar line and a new time signature of 2/4. The music is in 4/4 time. The subject is marked with a red circle and an asterisk. The second system starts at measure 129 and continues to measure 134. The subject is marked with a red circle and an asterisk. The music is in 2/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'ff'.

Example 64. The second fughetta starts with the subject in presto, mm. 127-134.

Borrowing the style of Fugue directly connects to Bach’s influence. In example 16 for Variation X in the second movement of her sonata, Seo marks “gigue Bach?” and creates the BECH motif. In the same manner, she puts “J.S.?” in the score at the first measure of the fifth variation, Presto, in the second movement of her sonata, which presents the similar style of J.S. Bach’s prelude for keyboard. This variation itself is a twenty-five measures long only two measures less than the first four variations. Starting from the lengthy fifth variation, a rest of the variations lengthens (Example 65).

The image shows a musical score for Variation V of J.S. Bach's prelude for keyboard, measures 631-633. The score is in two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked 'Presto' with a quarter note equal to 104. A red circle highlights a specific chord in the right hand, labeled 'J.S.?'.

Example 65. The style of J.S. Bach's prelude for keyboard, Variation V, mm. 631-633.

Simultaneously, Seo mixes sometimes more than two musical ideas or materials. Like example 25, the subject of fuggetta plays paired with syncopated rhythm. This exemplifies the complexity and eclecticism which comprise Seo's own compositional voices. However, the fact that Seo is affected by Bach evokes the connection between Seo and Beethoven—who admired Bach and was affected in his music as well.

### Quotation

Seo uses not only Beethoven's musical ideas or styles but also many other resources as references to compose her *Doremi Variations* and "La Hammerklavier" sonata. However, she only quotes Beethoven's Op. 106 in her music because Op. 106 significantly affected her sonata—she mentions in her program note that Op. 106 plays a major role as a focusing lens in composing her sonata, and even names her sonata "La Hammerklavier."<sup>43</sup>

The first, but small quotation can be found in the earlier example. Seo quotes the top melodic line at mm. 14-15 in the third movement of Op. 106 (Example 10) and uses it as motif 1 of the "wrong" theme for variations in the second movement of her sonata (Example 11).

<sup>43</sup> Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1."

The seventh variation, *Largo molto espressivo*, begins with a similar passage from the opening of the introduction in this movement (Example 3). While the introduction has one quarter note and one half note in 3/4 meter, this variation has one eighth note and one quarter note in 6/8 meter; therefore, the rhythm is the same (Example 66).

**VAR. VII.**  
**Largo molto espressivo** (♩ = 60)

672

Example 66. The evocation of the introduction, Variation VII, mm. 674-676.

Not only does this variation borrow the materials from the movement itself, it also borrows materials from Beethoven. The seventh variation provides the only exact quotation in this movement—a slowly descending melody over Beethoven’s enchanted Neapolitan chord in the third movement (Example 67).<sup>44</sup>

Example 67. A slowly descending melody over Beethoven’s Neapolitan chord, in the third movement of Op. 106, mm. 17-24.

<sup>44</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

The two measures of *meno mosso*, mm. 689-690, are exact quotations from mm. 22-23 from the third movement of Op. 106. At this point Seo had already used the slowly descending melody for eleven measures (mm. 678-688) to imply quotation of Beethoven, though in mm. 689-690 she makes the quotation more explicit (Example 68).

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at measure 683, features a right-hand melody with a green oval highlighting a descending sequence of notes. The tempo is marked 'molto rit.' and 'Meno mosso (♩ = 48)'. The second system, starting at measure 687, shows a similar descending melody in the right hand enclosed in a red box. This section is marked 'ppp' and 'una corda'.

Example 68. The exact quotation with the slowly descending melody in Variation VII, mm. 683-691.

The last quotation is also derived from the third movement of Op. 106, and it shows in the second movement of Seo's sonata. After the 32 measures of wandering introduction, the theme of the third movement, Op. 106 (Example 69), finally appears at m. 540. However, the way Seo uses Beethoven's theme is "wrong."<sup>45</sup> She borrows the first halves of the first and second phrases from the third movement of Op. 106 and then combines them to create one continuous phrase (Example 70).

<sup>45</sup> Seo, "Piano Sonata No. 1."

Adagio sostenuto ♩ = 92  
 Appassionato e con molto sentimento  
 na corda mezza voce  
 poco cresc. cresc.

Example 69. The theme of the third movement, Op. 106, mm. 1-8.

540 ♩ = 26  
 mezza voce  
 543 molto rit. pp pp

Example 70. The “wrong” theme in the “ricercare” movement, mm. 540-547.

There could be an argument that this last quotation is not in this category, quotation, because Seo modifies it. The reason that this quotation rather than a reference is because her “wrong” theme still evokes Beethoven’s theme from the third movement of Op. 106. The way that she starts the “wrong” theme with the first half of the first phrase and suddenly shifts to the first half of the second phrase supports her statement that her sonata is not “about” Op. 106—also, this is a perfect example how Seo expresses her own compositional voice by using Beethoven’s music.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

Soon after the “wrong” theme is introduced, the theme morphs into different styles: a Romantic style that a melody appears in different voices with an accompaniment of thick chords like Liszt and Rachmaninoff (Example 71), four parts of Fugue from style of Baroque period (Example 72), and Chopinesque with *rubato à la Chopin* and the left hand accompaniment with many elaborated notes in the right hand (Example 73).

549 *p*

Example 71. Romantic style: a melody in different voices with thick chords accompaniment, mm. 549-552.

554 *Andante con moto* ( $\text{♩} = 60$ ) *p*

Example 72. Four part of Fugue from style of Baroque period, mm. 554-560.

568  $\text{♩} = 30$  *p espressivo* *rubato à la Chopin*

571 13 5 7/8 7/8

Example 73. Chopinesque, mm. 568-572.

## *Conclusion*

Throughout three categories, motivic development, reference, and quotation, this paper examined how Seo is affected by Beethoven. She uses Beethoven's opening leap theme of Op. 106 as the opening motif for the first movement of her sonata. Moreover, she applies the opening motif to Beethoven's musical features, such as a fugal development and pseudo-recapitulation, which clearly reveal Beethoven's influence on her music. In *Doremi Variations*, the "do-re-mi" motif is her own motif based on solfege, not from Beethoven; however, this variation exemplifies Beethoven's influence because Seo is inspired by the compositional technique of motivic development, to compose this piece.

My Doremi Variations are unabashedly influenced by Beethoven. The simple motto do-re-mi appears and reappears in many different guises throughout the piece.... I have always admired Beethoven's humor. I love how he moves from innermost sincerity to the rash jocularly—from innig to bathos—in a heartbeat. I love the composed false starts, wrong notes, unexpected turns, and awkward counterpoint, all flowering from an inexhaustible reserve of sheer inventiveness. Beethoven's humor is cathartic and transcendent; it implies struggle and irony. Perhaps this humor derives its power from complex musical structure, wherein simple mottos unify vagaries through unceasing change.<sup>47</sup>

Similar to Beethoven who used fugues and variations in piano sonatas—which was phenomenally groundbreaking at the time—, Seo also composes the sonata's second movement in a theme and variation form, and inserts fughettas in the third variation of *Doremi Variations*. However, she does not follow the traditional musical structure of sonata and variation to reveal her own compositional voices. There is no theme, but the simple "do-re-mi" motif in *Doremi variation*. There is no second thematic group in the first movement of her sonata. Additionally, there is a fascinating yet bewildering section after the long transition-like passage. Measure 78 ends in half cadence, F (V of B-flat Major) and F-sharp (V of B Major) like a traditional sonata

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<sup>47</sup> Seo, "Doremi Variations."



form where the exposition ends in dominant to move to the development section. After the half cadence, the exposition repeat seems to be written out, instead of using a repeat sign, because the opening theme identically restarts (Example 30). However, the exposition is partially written out after m. 78: mm. 1-26 is written out in mm. 79-103, but mm. 28-78 is absent from the exposition repeat. In addition, it is not feasible to find the second thematic group in a different key or the modulation to the second key in the exposition. Due to the incomplete repeat of the exposition with no second thematic group in the exposition, Seo declares that the measure 78 is the end of the exposition which is directly followed by the development. She also suggests that this section can be analyzed like a superimposing medial caesura with the end of exposition, just as she superimposes B major and B-flat major (Example 74).<sup>48</sup>

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The top system, labeled 'Example 74', shows measures 23-30. It begins with a tempo of 'a tempo' (♩ = 76) and a 'tr' (trill) marking. The music is marked 'legg.' and 'espr.'. At measure 28, there is a tempo change to 'Allegro' (♩ = 120) and a dynamic shift to 'ff'. A red circle highlights the transition at measure 28. The bottom system shows measures 100-107. It also begins with 'a tempo' (♩ = 76) and 'tr', marked 'legg.' and 'espr.'. At measure 100, there is a tempo change to 'Allegro' (♩ = 120) and a dynamic shift to 'ff'. A red circle highlights the transition at measure 100. The two systems are connected by a horizontal line, and the red circles indicate the superimposition of a medial caesura.

Example 74. The exposition, mm. 23-30 (top), the absence of the part from m. 28 to superimpose medial caesura with the end of exposition, mm. 100-107 (bottom).

Not only does Seo use non-traditional musical structure, but she also borrows many different musical styles and ideas and combines them in her music. The result of these methods is establishing her own compositional voices, complexity and eclecticism. She abruptly changes

<sup>48</sup> Seo, Email.

tempi and dynamics and uses the sudden alternation of the styles. There are many odd meters like 5/8, 7/8, 5/16, 7/16, 10/16, 11/64 along with the frequent switch of meters, creating the tremendously complicated rhythms throughout her music. She even puts the indication “hesitant, as if unable to remember” in the second movement of her sonata. (Example 75).

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 592-593. The tempo is marked 'molto rit.' and the dynamics are 'pp'. The score includes a red box around the instruction 'hesitant, as if unable to remember'. The music features complex rhythms and odd meters, with a tempo marking of ♩ = 60. The score is written for piano and includes a red box around the instruction 'hesitant, as if unable to remember'.

Example 75. The indication “hesitant, as if unable to remember,” mm. 592-593.

All these compositional techniques cause the issue that Seo’s music is not easy to memorize—yet, it is the composer’s intent. She wishes to express more abstract ideas—struggle, optimism, and beauty through this sonata, and her desire is successfully achieved.<sup>49</sup> There are many struggles that occur though Seo’s work, such as the B-flat and B struggle, the “wrong” theme, the forgetfulness of the music, the difficult technique passages, and the rhythmic struggle, but the struggles are revealed in many different ways, contributing to the beauty of her music. The “ricercare” movement is a whole journey from the wandering introduction to the ten variations on the “wrong” theme to search for the third movement of Op. 106.

Seo obtains her musical ideas from a broad and diverse range of sources from Renaissance to Contemporary and applies them into her music. The term “ricercare” is musically related to Renaissance. Seo adopts the style of Baroque with J.S Bach’s style and Fugue. Regarding romanticism, there are many examples of Chopinesque and Liszt’s style with many

<sup>49</sup> Seo, “Piano Sonata No. 1.”

elements such as the epic flourish of harmony, pedal points, pseudo-folk passage, lyrical melody with thick chords, and use of the wide pitch range. The aspect of Jazz music also affects her music. However, Seo's music absolutely manifests Beethoven's influence along with the other examples in the paper. Her sonata opens with Beethoven and ends with Beethoven. The exposition of the first movement is a clear example of how Seo paraphrases Op. 106's themes and keys. She uses the polytonality, B-flat major and B major, for the opening motif in the first section, followed with not clearly divided first and second themes. Her sonata ends with long trill (Example 76). The use of long trill is one of late Beethoven's styles: the transcendentalism (Example 77).



Example 76. Trill in Coda, mm. 828-835.

Example 77. Beethoven's long trill in the first movement of Op. 106, mm. 102-111.

There is one question left to think about. Why do composers borrow other composers' music to write their own music? Composers use a serious motif or musical idea in a satiric manner like Debussy, and borrow a melody from others and use it as a theme for a musical structure like Brahms. Or, they obviously reveal others' influence like Rachmaninoff who used Beethoven's "fate" motif to compose his song "Fate." Is it a personal reason to borrow other musical resources or is there any other reasons that they quote or reference? There is no solid answer for any of these questions; however, it is clear when composers borrow many references and quote other composers' music in their own work, it eventually contributes to a growth of contemporary music. Contemporary music can be approachable to play for performers and to listen for listeners when composers use familiar music, even if the reason that composers borrow other composers' music for their own compositions may be entirely personal, like an homage. By successfully building up her own distinctive voice through Beethoven's prominent influence, Seo also formulates her music as a fascinating art form for the twenty-first century.

"...me more as a rebel than a worshipper of Beethoven (the epitome of this patriarchal Western tradition!), although in reality, I am both. Doremi Variations are deep down very different from Beethoven because it is built on the principle of vagaries rather than organic unity. I think my themes change like mutants, and I use such transformations to cross various styles."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Juri Seo, Email to Kwoon Lee, March 14, 2018.

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## Appendix

—Interview with Juri Seo—

Kowoon Lee: With whom did you study in South Korea?

Juri Seo: I went through many different teachers. The last teacher I had was Cheong Mook Kim, a professor at Yonsei.

KL: Did your music/musical styles get influenced by your educational background (where you studied and with whom) and your nationality (South Korean) into your music/musical styles? If it is, how do you incorporate them?

JS: Nationality not so much. I was trained as a Western musician through and through. But growing up in Korea, I definitely had a good amount of exposure to Korean music. This is something I am hoping to get into some more. I have some plans to do projects and workshops involving Korean music. My music is often polystylistic. I learned traditional music (common practice tonality) in Korea with an unusual rigor for a contemporary composer. Then I was suddenly exposed to newer music when I moved to the states. My original style came after about 5 years in the states in the purple area in between these styles.

KL: You said that you love functional tonality, counterpoint, and classical form which I can definitely connect to DoReMi Variations. So, are all your musical styles that are stated on

your website come from certain teacher(s)? Why do you love all the characteristics of your musical styles, such as functional tonality, classical form, fast-changing tempi and dynamics, counterpoint, etc.?

JS: Like I said, I've had many different teachers and I studied with most of them only for a short time. The most influential teacher in establishing my voice was Reynold Tharp, professor at the University of Illinois. He exposed me to many newer styles and helped me find balance. I still use tonality because I haven't been able to find equally complex but recognizable syntax. I've been trying to find newer ways of using tonality, taking it to unexpected directions, manipulating timbre, expanded chords etc., and I am still searching. The ideas like contrasts (fast-slow, loud-soft etc), and complexity come from centuries of Western musical ideals. Complex unity. I like music that has everything in it.

KL: Please share with me if you have any thoughts or experiences (and if you are willing to share) of gender issues.

JS: It's obviously a very complicated and delicate problem. The negative attitudes toward women composers that exist currently is partly an extension of Western music aesthetics that was created largely by the culture dominated by men (obsession with structural unity, thinking of musical development as a progression that is justified by some historical imperatives). In such environment more men thrived, and the women who thrived despite the prejudice have been underrepresented and undervalued. The changes in culture will happen gradually, but it begins with the participation of more women as composers and performers. I am happy to see that there have been more activities designed to help speed

up this progress (WCFH is one of them of course), and I hope to take a bigger part in it moving forward. Just as a side note, my experience as a Korean composer differs quite significantly. In Korea, most musicians, including composers, are women, so it felt normal to be a woman and a composer. (Only retrospectively, I recognize this as an extension of misogyny. Music was viewed as a nonessential activity, a mere entertainment, so it was delegated to women.) Consequently, despite having grown up in a more repressive culture toward women, I did not share the same kind of hurdles that many American women composers might have had to overcome in the early days of their training. Most mid-career composers I looked up to were women. I've become much more aware of the problem of imbalance after many years in the US. You said something about #metoo movement. I do see that all these issues are related (all stemming from misogyny), but I am not sure if it is helpful to discuss the widespread sexual aggression in the physical context in conjunction with the problem of underrepresentation in the professional context.

KL: How and why did you get into music? What made you start to learn/play music? How was your childhood that is related to music?

JS: I learned to play the piano from my mom when I was very young. She was an amateur pianist and taught music to little children. Her studio had five pianos (I think this is a kind of "keyboard academy" you are talking about!) without soundproofing. So it was a cacophonous mess with five children banging on the pianos at once. Even though I didn't learn about careful phrasing and voicing in that environment, playing the piano and making up songs were my favorite activities as a child. It was much later (around the age

of 13-14) when I started taking private lessons with a pro when I decided to become a composer. That's when I began harmony and counterpoint training as well.

KL: I would like to know about your teacher, Reynold Tharp, specifically about his influence.

Could you explain a little bit more about his influence? How did he expose you to many newer styles and help you find balance? Are there any memories that you could share with me?

JS: He was simply a great teacher. He wasn't particularly energetic or optimistic the way most good teachers are, and he didn't give compliments often. He simply showed me what could be improved. He is touched by European spectral music more than any other trend, so I got that from him. He's the one who introduced to me the music of Murail and Dalbavie, which I love. Looking back, one of the most useful--and specific--lessons I learned from him is the technique of blurring boundaries, usually by careful orchestration or composed resonances. For example, at the beginning of *vi*, I'm blurring the boundaries between A major and A minor chords. Later on, this blurring expanded to meta-stylistic exploration as well. In the end, my music turned out to be quite different from Reynold's, but I believe he was proud when I started to find my own voice toward the end of my studies in Illinois. My eclectic style comes from many other faculty members of Champaign-Urbana, who I also studied with. Zack Browning got the funk spirit in me. Erik Lund introduced me to jazz.

KL: I have several questions about the structural analysis of "La Hammerklavier," particularly for the first movement. Does the first movement have a second theme like sonata form? I think the gesture of m. 14 with trill and quintuplets is important, but I am not sure to consider it as the second theme because it's too early to show. If m. 14 is not the second theme but transition, what about the section from m. 28--is it the second theme? Or there is no second theme? Is the exposition mm. 1-109, or mm. 1-216? I am not sure the fugal development starts at m. 110 or at m. 217. If the development starts at m. 217, is the section (mm. 110-216) a closing theme? About m. 313, when I listened to that part, I thought the recapitulation starts in a different key, but it was not! what a surprise. So, can I consider that is a pseudo-recapitulation? Also, is there any particular reason that you noted "1st movement can be programmed by itself"?

JS: I wasn't thinking in terms of the traditional sonata form with clear key/thematic divisions. As weird as it may sound, I was thinking m. 79 as the end of exposition (it is a half cadence, I know.). But my sonata is not really tonal, and modulation to the second key—which is a crucial process in classical sonata—is not so feasible here. So after m. 79, the exposition repeat is written out, but flowing directly into development. (If you want to be technical, it is kind of like superimposing the medial caesura with the end of exposition, just as I am superimposing B major and B-flat major.) The first section is in B-flat and B at the same time. There are no clearly divided themes per se. They are all treated like fragments. I am putting Beethoven's themes and keys in a blender. The allusions are not only to tonality but also to sonata form. The fugal development begins in 253. I thought of 313 as a part of the development. There is a false recap though, at m. 356. You can see that the right hand has B-flat and left has B, which is flipped, and thus in the "wrong" key. It is

corrected in m. 374, where the recap begins. The challenge I have in the recap is that I would have to translate the idea of key resolution from the traditional sonata form. I think the recap is pretty funny as it struggles and fails to resolve the tonal tension (the piece is about struggle, failure, and humor after all.). The reconciliation happens in one brief moment in m. 453-455, the only place where I quote Beethoven mostly unaltered. The first-mov performance indication: I think the first movement is self-contained; but the main reason for that is because the whole piece is long and difficult.